

MARCHING IN PLACE (STANDING)

This progression of seated marching strengthens the hip flexors. The movement pattern is specific to walking and helps participants initiate, practice, and complete safe weight transfers.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Simulates coordination and timing for leg action while walking.
- ⦿ Improves step height and length.
- ⦿ Requires core stability during leg movement.

Set It Up »

You may need some additional chairs for this activity. Additional balance support is often needed.

How to Do It »

The Start

Participants should stand with good posture (soft knees, abs in, ribs lifted) and adequate balance support. Here are some examples of balance support for Marching in Place. Place each participant:

- ⦿ Between two sturdy chairs with another chair or wall behind them
- ⦿ With a wall to their back and one chair beside them
- ⦿ In a corner with two walls for balance support, perhaps a chair or walker in front of them
- ⦿ With hands on a railing or counter



The Moves

- ⦿ Have them begin marching in place.
- ⦿ Cue participants to keep their abs braced, ribs lifted, and their gaze on the horizon (a visual aid helps maintain balance).
- ⦿ Frequently cue them to keep their upright braced posture and to draw their abs in with each knee lift. Ask them if they notice how that helps them to keep their balance.
- ⦿ Continue marching slowly and deliberately for 15-30 seconds, as well tolerated.
- ⦿ Rest for a while, and then repeat if desired

Take It Further »

- ⦿ Longer march, up to a minute or two
- ⦿ Higher knees
- ⦿ Slightly faster marching

Give It More Balance »

- ⦿ Lessen the balance support.
 - They can use a lighter hold on handrail or chair.
 - They can use one hand instead of both to hold onto balance support.
- ⦿ Add one arm swing (with the free arm).
- ⦿ Add music. Use a slower melody, especially at first.
- ⦿ Add reciprocal arm swings with or without music *only* if participants are comfortable letting go of their support. Arm swings are very difficult for frail participants.
- ⦿ Dim the lights.

Keep It Safe »

Watch participants carefully. Marching is hard work and involves one-legged standing, if only for a brief time. Provide as much balance support as needed for each participant to feel comfortable and safe. After finishing, use Farmer's Stretch to stretch the hip flexors.